TRBR

What is INTERNET?

What is the Internet? Webopedia defined Internet as "a global network connecting millions of computers linking more than 100 countries, and enabling exchanges of data, news and opinions."
Source: www.voip-mobile.info

Internet Basics describes the Internet as "made up of millions of computers from all around the world, linked to each other by a network of telephone lines, cables and satellite connections."

People access this network by using ICT devices such as telephones, computers, i-phones, i-pads, mobile phones and other such devices.

What is internet used for?
The Internet is used most commonly these days for communication, publishing, entertainment, networking, research, commerce and on-line learning.

In terms of communications, people communicate through email, webmail and other interactive communications applications such as online chats, skype and online forums. Publishers also publish on line such materials as e-books, e-journals and general online resources for hobbyists, professionals, researchers and students.

Internet has also become a main source of entertainment. ICTs have advanced to a level where a single device that has access to the internet can now be used to read or watch the news, sports and follow a hobby, watch movies, documentaries and other multimedia materials.

The internet is also used for networking. Used somewhat as a traditional printed telephone directory, the internet is used to locate, establish and maintain contacts with individuals, groups and organizations. It is also used for commercial activities such as advertising, making bookings and reservations, buying and selling as well as for online learning.

For the purpose of the activities discussed the internet through the millions of servers around the world, store massive amounts of data, applications, tools and information which allow the internet to work.

The Internet has both positive and negatives aspects. There are numerous advantages and disadvantages, and for the purpose of this fact sheet, we will describe a few.

Advantages of using the internet include the:

* Ability to communicate in an essential, easy, fast, reliable and affordable way
* Ability to easily access knowledge, educational qualifications and opportunities to work anywhere in Vanuatu and overseas
* Ease of communication, wider circulation and choices of business adverts,

flexibility of work which help to promote business, trade and commerce

* Easy access to a variety of affordable online resources for well-being, personal development, personal interests and hobbies

* Improved and immediate access to information and news to promote sports and provide a variety of entertainment opportunities

* Access to goods and services over the internet makes it easier for people, including people with disabilities to do research, access resources, and to keep in touch and stay connected with peers, friends and families.

* The use of powerful search engines makes research, pooling of information and location of data, resource and people so much easier and faster

The internet and all technologies that have become important in the lives of people have negative aspects or disadvantages and some of these disadvantages include:

* People's privacy can be easily ruined by hackers, criminals and devious individuals and groups who prowl the internet for unsuspecting victims

* The intelligent capabilities of technologies are being used by criminals to cause cyber-crimes such as identity theft, phishing, stalking, grooming etc.

* There is a vast amount of information on the internet which makes it difficult for people to differentiate between valid and invalid information. Also available are sexually explicit materials, such as movies, photographs, writings and clips, which could easily fall into the hands of young children and innocent individuals unless filters and security mechanisms are in place.

* Because of the ease with which companies advertise and the effectiveness of attracting business online, unscrupulous businesses have sprung up and can take advantage of unwary victims.

* The flooding of mailboxes with spam or unsolicited commercial messages in bulk is another disadvantage of using the internet. Spam are not only annoying but can be dangerous if the recipients is not aware and/or the technology used is not properly protected with security applications.

* Viruses are a threat as well for users of the internet. Hackers are constantly developing viruses which are used to destroy computers and wipe out data and other valuable resources. An awareness of this threat and safe use of the internet will assist in protecting computers from viruses.

Many initiatives worldwide have been made to maximize the benefits of using the internet and to limit the disadvantages so that people using the internet are protected while online. These come in the form of government policies and legislation, filtering applications, password protection as well as the development of special content management systems.

In Vanuatu, a few such initiatives are in place; however, the country's legal framework for this purpose is still is being developed. In the absence of appropriate legal frameworks, the onus of staying safe while online rests with individuals, who need to be both smart and safe so that the maximum benefit of using the internet is attained.